LATER POEMS

BY

JOHN WHITE CHADWICK

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By John White Chadwick.

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LATER POEMS

Hon. Nate Chadwick

LATER POEMS

BY

JOHN WHITE CHADWICK

Go, speed the stars of Thought
On to their shining goals; —
The sower scatters broad his seed;
The wheat thou strew'st be souls.

EMERSON.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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PREFACE

It had been Mr. Chadwick's hope to have these poems published just before the fortieth anniversary of his installation (December 21, 1904), but being unable to accomplish this he had laid them aside, intending to complete the work upon them later. I am sure I am only carrying out his wishes in publishing them at this time.

I have tried to arrange them in chronological order, but I know I have not succeeded in every case.

ANNIE H. CHADWICK.

Brooklyn, February 9, 1905.

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LATER POEMS

LATER POEMS

A COMMON WEED

I FIND it growing here and there
In many places far away
From that, so dear and pleasant, where
I first beheld its mean array.

Oft have I asked what name it bears,
But none is wise enough to tell;
"Only a common weed!" it wears
That modest blazon passing well.

No shame it ever seems to take,
Whatever company it keeps;
Nor — vagabond of flowers — to make
The least ado where'er it sleeps.

It has no beauty to desire,
Gives, leaf nor bloom, no pleasant smell;
Yet are there flowers which I admire,
But do not love one half so well.

And why but that when I was small, —
A little boy of summers few, —
Beside a ruddy cottage wall
This common weed so blithely grew,

As if it were the fairest rose
That ever on the breast of June
Made sweetness there; so from it flows
A spell that puts my heart in tune

With all the poor pathetic things
Of that young life so long ago,
And from their shape and action brings
A kindling warmth, a kindly glow.

I see again the tiny yard
That neighbored with the open door,
The narrow plot of feeble sward;
Within, the spotless yellow floor;

And, moving softly to and fro,
My mother with her gentle eyes,
My father bronzed as those who go
Down to the sea in ships, and wise

A COMMON WEED

In all its lore; my sisters dear —
I seem to see them now as then,
And, as the present moment clear,
All their young ways come back again.

Nor these alone, but all that made
My early years so warm and bright,
That heaven's self might cheaply fade
Matched with such simple-sweet delight.

Such magic has this common weed
To charm my backward-yearning heart,
That I would plant its fruitful seed
E'en where the "skyey roadways" part.

And just because you have the power
To work this miracle for me, —
Poor little, nameless, graceless flower
I love you very tenderly.

MOIRA

What do I hear in Baby Moira's name?
No sound of trees soft stirring in the air
Of summer nights in gardens warm and sweet;
Nay, but the sea-bird's cry; the loud acclaim
Of winds that blow where northern headlands flare
And the great waves dash even at their feet —
The wild sea-horses that no man can tame.

THE PILGRIM WAY

NULLA VESTIGIA RETRORSUM

Read at a dinner of the New England Society of Brooklyn, December 21, 1885.

You know the picture: On the windy beach
John Alden and Priscilla stand apart,
Speaking no word; so still it seems that each
Might hear the beating of the other's heart.

No dream is theirs of that degenerate time,
When one, a scion of their vigorous stock,
Our gentlest poet, in a tender rhyme
Shall all the treasure of their hearts unlock.

That lessening sail against the eastern sky —
What costly freight is buried in her hold
Whose loss should make the April sunshine lie
On sea and shore so cheerless, gray, and cold?

Their thoughts are all with her, but they outwing
Her laggard course across the treacherous deep,
Nor pause till they can nestle where the spring
In English lanes has just begun to peep.

How sweet it were to keep their bridal there
When, after April, May should come apace,
And then the summer, as an angel fair,
Should laugh outright in June's all-perfect face!

To hear the joy-bells in the ivied tower
Ring out their nuptial gladness to the breeze,
And so move homeward through a gleaming shower
Of blossoms falling from the hawthorn trees!

It may not be; but only yesterday
It might have been; so near, so very near,
The Mayflower swinging at her moorings lay;
And who would go and who would tarry here?

What sounds were those that on the eastern gale
Came to them there and not to them alone?
Voices that made the ruddiest faces pale,
Sadder than ocean's melancholy moan?

"Oh, fools," they cried, "upon this barren shore
A better Church or State to hope to find,
Or aught that can your reverence kindle more
Than the dear things that you have left behind, —

"The homes wherein your fathers lived and died,
The fields they tilled with manful toil and sweat,
The churches where they worshiped side by side,
The shores where they the rash invader met,

"The ordered custom, the unwritten law,
A million precedents have welded fast
In such a bond as never others saw
In all the mighty immemorial past.

"What sweeter kernel in your rougher shell —
Yours, who already on the bleak hillside
Have smoothed for corn the graves that else would tell
How many of your bravest ones have died?

"Nay, but you cannot cheat the savage foe,
Nor so obliterate your dead that he
Shall not how feeble is your remnant know,
And band against you with the unpitying sea.

"Come back, come back; ere yet it is too late
Leave your poor huts, your undistinguished dead,
Crowd the frail deck, upheave the anchor's weight;
Quick be the parting, ay, the cursing, said!"

Voices and voices! On the barren lea
They heard them cry across the cloudy rack,
And every bush and century-growing tree
Had found a voice and seemed to echo, "Back!"

"Back!" From the forest's depths they heard it sound,
The voice of spirits eager for their doom.
"Back!" From the lonely graves it came and drowned
Their tempted hearts in seas of deadlier gloom.

But that was yesterday, and now to-day
Their poor ship falters in the offing there
'Twixt sea and sky as if she would allay
With one last hope the inevitable despair.

Yea, she is gone, nor bears upon her deck
One man or woman of the Pilgrim band
For all the horror of the winter's wreck
There in the desolate and homeless land.

No backward step! More than the voices told
Of Merry England, in their hearts they knew;
More than the graves had echoed, and the old
Witch-haunted forest pierced their bosoms through.

But they had chosen and they would abide,
Here they had come and they had come to stay;
Whatever loss or sorrow might betide —
No backward step; this was the Pilgrim way.

The thing that has been it shall be again:
So runs the promise of the ancient Word;
And, oh, how often since that morning when
John Alden and Priscilla might have heard

Each other's heart-beats, men of Pilgrim stock
Have heard their voices as they stood forlorn
On their own bleak and barren Plymouth Rock,
In some great epoch's cold and cheerless morn!

"Come back! Come back!" How clear the pleading cry,
From old Tradition's ivy-mantled towers,
From haunts where ease and comfort sleeping lie,
Dreaming away the irrevocable hours!

What old abuse, what hoary precedent,
What chattering ghost of faith once fair and sweet,
Has not some measure to the music lent
Still tugging backward their reluctant feet!

Why should they care a higher faith to win
Than that which glorified their fathers' creed?
How should they dare denounce, as 't were a sin,
That which their law and custom had decreed?

So from the past and at the future's gate
Has crouched and howled at them a giant Fear,
"Go back! Go back! Ere yet it is too late;
All hope abandon ye who enter here."

Back have they gone? Not if their spirit stuff,
Not their flesh only, was the Pilgrim kind,
Which ever as the way grows steep and rough
Shows a more fixed, unalterable mind.

The time goes on; the symbol does not fail;
For us as for the generations gone
Good things with bad must struggle to prevail;
With Error's might fair Reason's radiant dawn.

And we, like them from whom our stock derives,
Elect on ways we have not known to go,
'Gainst the night-watches how God's morning strives
In our own bosoms soon or late must know.

There will be voices sounding in our ears,
  Warning us backward from our fateful quest, —
Voices of all the dead and vanished years,
  Voices of Doubt and Fear and Peace and Rest.

Then when we wonder if it were not well
  To strive no more, and yield the vantage won,
As men plucked backward from the mouth of hell,
  Clear as in heaven our own New England sun,

May our resolve be taken. It is meet
  For us to be the Pilgrims of our day;
Whatever graves may open at our feet,
  No backward step; this is the Pilgrim way!

ABRAHAM KUENEN

In that dear fable knowledge has dethroned,
The patriarch Abraham from a far-off land,
Ur of the Chaldees, came; and his small band
In Canaan dwelt with him as men who owned
They had no city. But the years atoned
For that first weakness: as the blowing sand
The multitude who blessed his guiding hand
On shores where every alien water moaned.

Our Father Abraham! From a place of thought,
Dim, dark, and strange, and full of evil dreams,
By thee a few at first were safely brought.
But now, behold, how soon by countless streams
Thy children plant and build; and none can praise
Too much the courage of thy lonely ways!

ANNIVERSARY HYMN

Thou glorious God, before whose face
The generations pass away,
As to our eyes the tender grace
And marvel of each shining day!

We thank thee for the joy sublime
Of years so radiant with thy power
That all the best of endless time
Seems granted to the fleeting hour.

We praise thee for the surer right,
The clearer message from above,
The lengthening day, the shortening night,
The wiser ministries of love.

We bless thee for the friends we miss,
Who made our peace and stilled our pain;
We trust thee on some height of bliss
To bring them close to us again.

We magnify thy holy name ;
And, while in thee our hearts rejoice,
Strong be our wills through blame and shame
To do the bidding of thy voice.

THE BLIND GENTIAN

It grows in many a nook and bend
Our autumn ways along,
First cousin of the flower which love
Has sanctified with song.

A poor relation! so it seems,
Whom no one cares to praise;
That never gave a poet yet
One leaf among his bays.

No maiden lays you to her breast,
Or binds you to her zone;
No ruthless hand is glad to pluck
And claim you as its own.

I often wonder what within
Doth secretly abide;
I never yet have dared to draw
The clinging veil aside.

THE BLIND GENTIAN

Whatever fate hath made you thus, —
A fountain closely sealed, —
One lesson in your looks I find,
For gentle souls revealed.

For who, and not himself be blind,
Can pass your coverts by,
Nor find the colors that you wear
The bluest of the sky?

Such your reward, or such I deem,
For reverence pure and sweet,
Which veils an angel-face where some
Rush in with foolish feet.

Dear, humble flower, go home with me,
That I may better tell:
With such as are least bold with heaven
Doth most of heaven dwell.

A COOKING LESSON

'T was St. Theresa gave it. She, you know,
Was here on earth three centuries agone,
And lived in Spain, and starved her body so —
Her spirit too — that, dying, she had won
Such fame for sainthood as was never worn
By any other in that land forlorn.

And her dear Lord, or Mary ever mild,
In token of her sweet and perfect grace,
Would sometimes grant her, happy as a child,
To see a vision of the heavenly place;
And oft for hours it was her joy to be
Rapt in a high and glorious ecstasy.

Then earth was not; then heaven was opened wide;
Then once, they tell, that with a flaming spear
Her Saviour ravished from her bleeding side
Her living heart; while she, without a fear,
Could wish no blessing greater, only so
To be forever in her gladsome woe.

The coming rapture gave no sign before,
Nor made account of any task in hand;
And once it chanced to seize her at the hour
When she was cooking for the convent band;
Not as our daughters do who know by heart
A hundred secrets of the gentle art,

But not indifferently to the humble task.
'T was fish that day, just turning to a brown
No Andalusian girl could softer ask
For her dear cheek, when swift and sudden down
The vision swept, and she was caught away
Into a light which was not that of day.

To save the dinner! not to lose her grip
Upon the fry-pan — that was her last thought
Just as she felt her footing wholly slip
Away from earth, and heaven its splendor brought
So close to her that she could lay her hand
On things that angels scarce can understand.

The vision passed, and sooner than her wish
Earth had come back; and in her hand behold
The fry-pan still, and in the pan the fish

A COOKING LESSON

Done to a charm! The kitchen centuries old
Had never furnished forth a daintier bit —
For angels' food it had not been unfit.

Dear sister sainted, be our pattern saint
In this at least: whatever ecstasy
May shake our souls, till we, with rapture faint,
Seem less on earth than in the heavens to be,
As thou didst not thy proper task forego
While heaven's rose showed many a mystic row,

So may it be with us! From common tasks
Of love and duty may no visions lure,
And each but prove an angel that enmasks
With glorious semblance service sweet and pure!
Work, love-inspired, is better than the best
Imagined foretaste of the heavenly rest.

EOSTRA

Goddess of the early days
  When the world was fresh and young —
Whom our fathers loved to praise,
  Whom they worshiped, whom they sung,
Art thou nothing in our time
But the heading of a rhyme?

Dying, thou didst give thy name
  To the Christian's feast of life,
Feast that celebrates the fame
  Of an hour with wonders rife, —
Hour that wrought of death the doom,
When was rent the sacred tomb.

They that trust the wondrous tale,
  They that keep the happy time,
Have for thee no gracious "Hail!"
  Have for thee no tuneful rhyme —
Thankless even for thy name,
For their day of joyous fame.

But whenever hearts are fain
  For the winter past away,
When the springtime once again
  Makes them happy, makes them gay,—
Goddess bright, thy praise is sung
Now as when the world was young.

THE KING'S DIARY

JULY 14, 1789

"RIEN," he wrote, because it chanced that day
There was no hunt of fawn or stag or boar.
All else was nothing to the man who wore
The crown which once the brows of Hugh Capet
Had ached beneath, eight centuries away.
Since then what well-belov'd and hated more
Had worn it lightly, or with anguish sore,
Some strong to rule and many but to slay!

"Nothing!" And, while he wrote the senseless word,
The tocsin rang in Paris; the human flood
Poured onward raging till it came where stood
The Bastille. Soon the foolish King had heard
How prone it lay. Behold his aimless wit:
He and his kingdom were as he had writ.

1889

HYMN

FOR THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF MY INSTALLATION, DECEMBER 21, 1889

O THOU whose perfect goodness crowns
With peace and joy this sacred day,
Our hearts are glad for all the years
Thy love has kept us in thy way.

Thy glorious truth has made us free
From bounds of sect and bonds of creed;
Thy light has shone that we might see
Our own in every brother's need.

For common tasks of help and cheer,
For quiet hours of thought and prayer,
For moments when we seemed to feel
The breath of a diviner air;

For mutual love and trust that keep
Unchanged through all the changing time;
For friends within the veil who thrill
Our spirits with a hope sublime, —

For this and more than words can say,
We praise and bless thy holy name.
Come life or death: enough to know
That thou art evermore the same!

A MISSIONARY CHANT

Read at a Missionary Meeting at Saratoga.

Spirit of God, in whom we live,
Be with us in this fateful hour,
And on our spirits shed abroad
The tokens of thy gracious power.

With softened hearts we think of those,
The fathers of our heavenly birth,
Whose will was good to all mankind,
Whose song was ever, Peace on earth.

With serious mind and calm intent,
They followed hard in darkest night
That gleam of truth to them revealed
From thine eternal light of light.

It led them far from beaten ways;
But evermore, with faith unfeigned,
They held their course, as men who knew
A guiding star that never waned.

As for our fathers, so for us
  May that supernal radiance shine,
Our path illume, our spirits cheer,
  By day and night a conquering sign!

Not ours the earth they calmly trod,
  Nor ours the heavens that to their eyes,
Star answering star, in silence spoke
  A thousand tender mysteries.

Our earth a deeper wonder shows,
  Our skies a mightier host reveal,
Our bells of God their changes ring
  With fuller chords and grander peal.

All things, O God, thou makest new
  From age to age; thy plastic hand
Our reason's force, whereto the worlds
  Are shaped as by thy sole command.

But vain the vision's wider scope,
  And vain the glory vaster grown,
If 'mid the splendor, awful, cold,
  We orphaned walk, aghast, alone!

Not such our lot, but, choosing truth,
We ever choose the better part;
And every tide of knowledge bears
Thy children closer to thy heart.

How can we thank thee, gracious God,
For what no worth of ours has bought, —
The cheerful faith, the glorious hope,
The wider, deeper, grander thought?

Oh, not by words! as idle wind
They come and go, and leave unpaid
Our growing debt, till of our good
We stand in awe and half afraid.

Thy spirit shows a better way:
Deep in our hearts its mystic word
Is clear and strong, as if the ear,
List'ning, some voice from heaven heard.

It bids us wake from idle dreams,
To pluck our talent from the ground,
To gird our loins and go our way
Until that grievous place be found

A MISSIONARY CHANT

Where man for man a monster is,
And God another, strong in might,
And death, eternal death, were sweet,
If dreaming so were dreaming right.

It bids us go where doubt has wrung
Man's hope from out his aching breast,
And all is dark, and for his feet,
Far-wandering, there is no rest.

A deeper depth invites us still,
Where sin and shame the image mar
Of God in man; where wrath and scorn
Are near and drear, and love is far.

Spirit of God, in thunder speak,
To rouse us from our sluggish joy;
Our soft content accursed make,
Our peace with sharpest pain alloy,

Until for darkened souls, whom we
Can of our light and gladness give,
Light has sprung up; and so our thanks
Thou shalt at length, O God, receive.

OUR CHRISTMAS DAY

WHAT means for us this sacred day
  By all the happy children blest,
So long desired, it breaks in dreams
  The quiet of their rest?

Not ours the angels' peaceful song
  From heaven's height nor orient star,
The magi's trackless way to guide
  With radiance pure and far.

But still upon the inward ear
  That song descends with music sweet,
Our hearts to cheer on darksome ways,
  With patience for our feet.

It sings the hope of things to be
  Beyond the anger and the strife,
When all the cruel hate shall cease,
  And Love be Lord of life.

No fabled mystery is ours
  Of One who for her honor made
The peasant's wife his heavenly bride,
  And she was not afraid.

No greater mystery we crave
  Than every gentle mother shows
When, by God's grace, another life
  Within her own she knows.

What need of miracle to make
  One Son of Man the Son of God,
When all the sons of men that e'er
  Earth's temple-floor have trod

Have but one lineage great and high,
  One Father who is over all
The heights of heaven, the deeps of hell, —
  Who hears them when they call?

Nor less if Brahm or Zeus the name,
  Than when as God or Lord addressed:
The prayer that trusts and loves the most
  For him is ever best.

OUR CHRISTMAS DAY

O brother of the righteous will,
  O brother full of power and grace,
Without one thought of fear or shame,
  We come before thy face!

Not ours to hail thee as the saints
  Of olden times, as some to-day,
God, very God; and still to us
  Thou art the Life, the Way.

Thou art the Life: in thee we find
  The glory that our lives might wear
If we for love and truth and right
  Could learn to do and dare.

Thou art the Way; for, still to know
  What goodness ever reigns above,
There is no other way than thine, —
  To live the life of love.

One God have we! Sufficeth He
  For every want our souls can know;
He holds us with his loving hand,
  He will not let us go.

We love thee for thy tender love
To want and sin and sorrow shown;
We reverence all thy truth and grace;
We worship God alone.

Lo, in such heart we come with all
Who hail thee on this sacred day
In various speech! Thou wilt not spurn
Our simple gift away.

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

I 'm sure, dear friends, that you have heard the story
Of Walter Savage Landor's laureled head,
How one who for that deed now lives in glory
Plucked out his one white hair and sweetly said,

It was her own. And you, my friends, most kindly,
The fact that I am growing old would hide
With lovely flowers, and fain would I as blindly
As might be in this pretty scheme of yours confide.

But, gentle friends, the fact cannot be hidden;
What can be done I 've done to keep it close,
Friends have I bribed and others have I chidden,
There 's nothing for me but to take the dose.

But in the flowers you sent the goblet wreathing,
It does n't taste so bad as else it might,
And so, a blessing on your kindness breathing,
I toss it off and bid you both good-night.

1890

AN EASTER HYMN

Thou whose spirit dwells in all,
  Primal source of life and mind,
In the clod as in the soul,
  Ever full and unconfined!

What shall separate from thee?
  Naught of all created things!
Joy and sorrow, good and ill,
  Each from thee its essence brings.

Thine the atom's faintest thrill,
  Thine the humblest creature's breath,
Prophet-soul in every kind,
  Yearning still through life and death —

Yearning for the crowning race —
  Man, in whom at last is told
Every secret strange and sweet
  From the farthest days of old:

Secrets too of things to be,
In the cycles on before:
Love which stronger is than death,
Life with thee forevermore.

1890

AT BREAK OF DAY

JULY 21, 1891

When our darling passed away,
It was near the break of day;
And the birds with one accord
Sang their praises to the Lord.

What a burst of melody!
Just as if there could not be,
In a world so fair as this,
Room for anything but bliss!

Slower drew our darling's breath;
Then the peace which some call death
Folded down; and all around
Still the birds made happy sound.

Was it only birds that sung?
On our hearts a music rung
As of praises hymned at morn
When in Heaven a child is born.

ON HOLY GROUND

WRITTEN FOR A MEETING OF THE NEW YORK LEAGUE OF UNITARIAN WOMEN

WHAT has drawn us thus apart,
From the common daily round,
Bringing here a lowly heart,
Standing as on holy ground?

Not the scorn of humble things, —
Simplest tasks that love can find;
Not the pride of thought that brings
Laggard will and restless mind.

Nay, but here upon the height,
Rapt from idle cares away,
Fain our souls would see a light,
Herald of the coming day:

Morning visions high and pure,
Glorious things that are to be,
Faith and hope that shall endure,
Love's abiding unity;

All the things that make for peace
In the daily toil and strife;
All that can our part increase
In the world's diviner life.

Short the time we linger here;
Then, with earnest heart and hand,
Back to work with holy fear;
Every vision, God's command.

1891

LOVE, DEATH, AND SORROW

Upon a day of fierce and blinding rain
One they called Love was wed with one called Death:
She lovely as the rose, its breath her breath,
He swart as night; and duly of these twain
A child was born called Sorrow; and with pain
Like unto theirs whom nothing comforteth
Love clove to him: "My all in all," she saith,
"And if he die for what can I be fain?"

Then Wisdom came and said, "O foolish one,
Why dost thou fear? — for Death is passing strong,
And thou, O Love, art yet more strong than he,
For all his brawn. Wherefore thou needst not shun
Hurt for thy Sorrow; he shall live as long
As thou canst wish; yea, only die with thee."

1892

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

READ BEFORE THE BROOKLYN INSTITUTE ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTHDAY

To that loved prelude of the song of songs
Our friend and poet wrote for us, when he
And Fields and Taylor tented happily
On Hampton Beach — the simple tale belongs.

How he upon the shining sands had traced
This thing and that, and by the rising tide,
Relentless now as when by Cnut defied,
Saw all his record quietly effaced.

Wherein a tender parable he found
Of all the poems he had ever made,
Touched for an hour by mingled sun and shade,
Then swept into oblivion's great profound.

'T was like his modest nature thus to shape
The fashion of his future among men;
But we whose coward hearts were failing when
Our good ship staggered off the windy cape

Of Sixty-one, and clear above the storm,
Heard his brave voice ring out in Luther's tone,
Then took fresh courage, — and not then alone, —
How shall we not forever keep a warm

And spacious corner in our hearts for him
Who helped us then, and in a hundred ways
Has added strength and beauty to our days?
How shall the tides his record ever dim?

'T is sand and rock; as other men's the same,
Even the greatest, and the flood of time
Shall bear away the weak and casual rhyme,
But leave unspoiled the granite of his fame.

All we who love New England's hills and streams,
The surges thundering on her rocky shore,
Her wealth of pious memories, and her store
Of fables rarer than our rarest dreams,

How can we ever but remember one
To whom these things were as his natural breath;
Who cherished them until the gates of death
Shut him forever from our genial sun?

See how he loved the Bearcamp's hurrying wave,
Chocorua's height, and all the mountains round;
And best of all his Merrimac, whose sound
Makes a loved music for his modest grave.

How in his song the dead past lived again,
Old saints and sinners plied their various trade;
And sweet for us the love of youth and maid
As if 't were ours — that dear, delicious pain!

But could this happy service be forgot,
And even from our memory be razed
That Abraham Davenport our poet praised,
What flood oblivious could ever blot

From our remembrance what he did for man,
And so for God in that accursed time
When slavery's shadow darkened all our clime,
And truth and right were ever under ban?

Oh, then his Quaker gun was toughest steel,
And shotted to the lips with bolts that fell,
Hot as with presage of a coming hell
On men foredoomed his righteous scorn to feel, —

Men who God's image freely bought and sold,
The bloodhounds baying on the victim's track,
The unctuous priests who would have sent him back,
The poor scared sheep, to slavery's reeking fold.

All this forget? Not while our country holds
Her empire safe between the sounding seas,
And all that love her, as on bended knees,
Thank God that one humanity enfolds

Our people now, no longer bond and free;
Not while we cherish any glorious name
Of those great souls who won the glad acclaim
Of millions brought from death to liberty.

And once again, not sand, but adamant
The record holds of all the songs he sang,
Filled with the love of God; his trumpet rang,
And all the walls of immemorial cant,

And all the watchtowers of the warring creeds
Trembled and shook as those of Jericho
In that old fable which the faithful know.
He told us that it was not words, but deeds,

That God desired; and to his raptured gaze
The heavens were opened, and he saw within
All souls that are, made clean from every sin,
And walking glad the everlasting ways.

He sang the Eternal Goodness, — how it lies
All pain and sin and sorrow round about, —
The craven fear, the thinker's honest doubt,
Yea, life and death with all their mysteries.

Wherefore, O poet, as thou goest on
Into the heart of that great company,
Where all the noblest are akin to thee,
Fear not for any work already done.

While flows thy peaceful river gently down
To meet the sea, and while the sea obeys
That law by which she ever swings and sways,
Thy fame is sure of its immortal crown.

1892

TO A DEAR OLD FRIEND

APRIL 23, 1892

In dream I saw the great assize,
And on the throne the Judge was set;
And all the folk were gathered round,
On business of importance met.

It came your turn. I saw you go
With modest mien, as here alway,
And heard you state the simple fact
That you were born on Shakespeare's day.

"Well, and what poems have you writ?
What plays of wonderful renown,
To match the man's whose life began
By Avon's stream in Stratford town?"

More humbly, then, you bowed your head,
And said, "Your worship, if you please,
I 've tried to do my proper work:
I have not done such things as these."

The Judge's face grew stern; and then
Upspoke a man who, truth to say,
Looked more like me than any man
That I have seen for many a day.

He said, "If I my voice may raise
In such a vast immortal throng,
I 'd like to speak this woman's praise:
She made her life a perfect song, —

"A song of faith and hope and cheer;
A song of labor, peace, and love;
A song of every grace that makes
Our earth below like heaven above."

And scarce the word had reached its end
And waited answering judgment, when
A hundred voices all around
Broke forth into a great "Amen!"

Then spoke the Judge: "Who maketh life
A song, doth that God loveth best:
Ho, there, a crown, and then a place
Up there with Shakespeare and the rest!"

COUNTER–ACCUSATION

I stood beside the body of one dead
  Who had in life been alien to all good;
  Had ever with the baser party stood,
Was ever to the meaner practice wed.
But, now, the form from which the soul had fled
  Was calm as sleep, and, on the marble face,
  Of gross or evil passion not one trace
Remained. Then, softly to myself I said:
Much do we hear about the grievous wrong
  Done by the flesh to the indwelling soul;
But here was one, — and many there may be
Like him, — whose spiritual part was strong
  The subject flesh most basely to control.
Now from that long enslavement it is free.

WILLIAM HENRY FURNESS

APRIL 20, 1892

Serus in cœlum! But, when you shall hear
The tardy summons, and shall straightway pass
Into that world where we no more shall see
Dimly, as if reflected in a glass,

The friends we love, but clearly, face to face,
I know of One who, when he comes your way,
Will smile upon you very graciously,
And in a voice all gentleness will say:

"Many have loved me well, but none, I deem,
Better than you. Now sit you here by me,
And how my day was like your lovely dream,
And how 't was other, you shall plainly see."

And half, it seems, I should be glad, dear friend,
My days to shorten of their natural span,
So might I stand a little way apart,
When, without glass, you see the Son of Man.

A THOUGHT OF WHITTIER

"That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

It was not much, O death, to quell the strength
Which trembled in that slight and spiritual frame
Which the long years, albeit free of blame,
Had wasted so that unto us at length
Hardly he seemed to be a mortal man,
But one who out of heaven had wandered back
To bless awhile our dark and stumbling track
With speech of things beyond our earthly span.

But this, O death, is strange: that thou hadst power
To quench the light that was in those clear eyes
Which brighter shone as from the evening skies
The darkness fell upon his sunset hour.
Absolute loss? or there, beyond the tomb,
Wilt thou, O God, their glorious light relume?

1892

THE PRICELESS PEARL

Written after reading Mr. T. W. Higginson's Sonnet, "An Egyptian Banquet."

"Death, the Egyptian, melts and drinks the pearl:"
And straight a rapture through his being runs,
A fire that seems the essence of all suns
That ever made the summer pomp unfurl
Its banners, and the green leaves softly curl
Back from the fruit; a sense of shining ones
Engirding round, until his vision shuns
The awful splendor of that radiant whorl.
And then a voice: These things wouldst thou explore?
Who drinks the pearl of life compounded so
Of love, and joy, and hope, and peace, and pain —
All sweetest, saddest things that mortals know —
Drinks to his own salvation: he shall gain
Life beyond life, and Death shall be no more.

1892

THE MOUNTAIN

From lands of sunshine gay with bloom
We took the Northern course and came
To that great city which delights —
Grim satire — in Seattle's name.

A remnant weak, his people take
The crumbs that from her table fall:
The past is theirs: the future hers
Who crowds them rudely to the wall.

Proudly she sits upon her hills,
Her various waters gleaming round;
Her snowy-crested mountains fair
Soft-mirrored in their bloom profound.

But one, the top and crown of all
High-soaring far above the rest,
Hid in impenetrable clouds
His towering head, his ample breast.

But oh! at length a morning dawned —
  One more divine earth never knew —
When, better far than tales or dream,
  The mountain clove the heavenly blue!

The Mountain! All the snowy peaks,
  Which mountains seemed the day before,
That day were little hills, so high
  We saw the highest climb and soar.

So high! so grand! and yet withal
  So sweetly, delicately fair,
We had believed, if one had said,
  "A dream, a phantom of the air."

And, as the perfect day went by,
  More dreamlike still the mountain grew,
As gathering mists — a purple zone —
  Around his base their vesture drew.

All white and pure uplifted there,
  It floated in the azure deep,
A hill of heaven, a Mount of God!
  It made our hearts with gladness leap.

. . . . . .

THE MOUNTAIN

The things of sense are types of soul:
How oft for many days the best
Is thick involved in clouds that chill
Man's heart within his lonely breast!

And then there comes a day of days,
And, floating bright in heavenly air,
He sees the Mount of God, all white
With fields of faith and founts of prayer.

And by that glorious vision blest,
He knows the peace that passeth thought.
God folds him to his heart; his good
Is better than the best he sought.

1893

DECEMBER VIOLETS

For the day you celebrate
I am, dear friends, a day too late.
Tardier still the flowers I bring
Blossoms of an early spring?
Nay, for in your hearts I know
Still the spring-time blossoms blow
Now as twenty years ago.
Dare you say it is n't so?
And when your December lies
On your hearts as gentle-wise
As new snow upon the ground,
Still the violets will be found
Under that all safe and sound.

1893

DOGMATIST AND AGNOSTIC

THIS one the Mystery deems so small
It seems to him he knows it all,
As one a handful clips;
And to the other 't is so vast
He can but stand with eyes downcast,
His finger on his lips.

1893

A HAPPY MEETING

Day after day went gladly by,
And night to night new splendors lent,
As from the East we sought the West,
And spanned the mighty continent.

At length the happy goal attained,
The blue Pacific at our feet,
What magic changes all around
Our senses charm, our vision greet!

Its golden globes amidst the green
The orange hangs like fairy lights,
The poppies flame in every mead,
Fresh wonders crown the novel heights.

All new and strange! — until one day,
Beneath the live-oak's generous shade,
A little flower I chanced to spy:
No prettier flower God ever made.

Then straight the landscape swam in mist,
Mountains and sea were lost to view,
I trod the Atlantic's rocky shore
And saw the things my boyhood knew.

There had I plucked this tiny flower
Or spared it in its narrow place,
Long, long ago, and wondered much
At such a happy little face.

So far away, and yet the same!
And, if the truth I dare to tell,
I could have kissed its ruddy bloom, —
That sturdy little pimpernel.

For to my heart a message sped
From out the bosom of the flower,
Which shall not fail for many a day
To cheer me with its gracious power.

A sign and symbol shall it be
Of humble things, which, though we range
From farthest East to farthest West,
Like God are sure, and never change.

SANTA BARBARA, CAL., 1893

DEFEAT

I KNEW a captain girded by the foe,
Who might, had not his coward courage failed,
Have splendidly the hostile front assailed,
And followed up his vantage blow on blow,
Until it reeled and broke and fled. But no! —
He still must wait until his trumpets hailed
A hireling troop to help him; then prevailed, —
And thought himself a victor, doing so.

I better knew of one who, sore beset,
Had conquered by his force of heavenly will,
But he, more curst, must wait and wait until
With him vile circumstance had basely met
To help him through. Him let no plaudits greet,
Self-conquered with immeasurable defeat.

1893

CHURCH ANNIVERSARY HYMN

With earnest hearts and willing hands,
With spirit high and purpose fair,
O God, our fathers built to thee
This home of faith, this house of prayer.

Here Truth revealed her glorious face,
And Right her solemn mandate gave,
And Love triumphant over Death
Saw all her mystic banners wave.

Here Peace possessed the troubled mind,
And Passion's stormy heart was stilled;
And sweet on trembling lips became
The cup with sorrow over-filled.

Our fathers' God, not less than theirs
Our need of help and strength and cheer,
The stern rebuke, the healing hand,—
Oh, may we come and find them here!

And ever, by their memory blest,
May we their faith and love renew;
Still seeking higher things to know,
Still finding grander work to do.

THE SECRET FLAW

Life-sculptors we, and on our solemn dream
The image dawns of perfect things to be;
Whereat we labor long and lovingly,
Until no more their wonders merely seem,
But real grow, and on our vision gleam
All white and pure, and in their eyes the free
Glad look of souls that stand rejoicingly
Full in the light of God's eternal beam.

'T is bravely said; but there was one who well,
It seemed, had so conceived; with ceaseless toil
He wrought, until at length, half-blind with tears,
Some secret flaw his whole creation spoil
He saw too late. Alas! the wasted years,
And in those eyes the auguries of hell!

1893

TO ROBERT COLLYER

ON HIS 70TH BIRTHDAY

You dear old Robert whom we love so well,
If we the half of all our love should tell,
  You would grow red, as was that famous rose
  Of York which blushed, as every poet knows,
To Lancaster on some soft bosom's swell.

And that would not be right and fit; for you
To York's white rose have ever been as true
  As saints to God, — have worn it in your heart,
  Have made its whiteness of your soul a part,
Fresh as that rose impearled with morning's dew.

We like to have you round; we like to see
That crown of glory which so jauntily
  You wear, as if already you had been
  Promoted, and the blessed things had seen
Which, at life's best, we know are sure to be.

TO ROBERT COLLYER

We like your shining face; it does us good
To see it beam; it makes our lazy blood
  Move faster, and our quickened hearts expand;
  And, when you hold us by your mighty hand,
Some doubtful things are better understood.

How is it, Robert? We, who strive with you
Some noble work for God and man to do,
  We argue, and we fret ourselves to prove
  The Perfect Life, the All-embracing Love;
But you just feel and know these things are true.

What is the secret? If you can, impart
Your cheery gospel of the trusting heart.
  But, if 't is not transferable, why, then,
  No whit the less we bring a glad amen, —
Glad that you, somehow, know the blessed art.

There are two fountains, one of tears, and one
Of wholesome laughter; and they play and run
  Anear each other. You to both have gone
  And drunk your fill, and then have led us on
To where they gleam and ripple in the sun.

TO ROBERT COLLYER

You are so human: here 's the central fact
Of which your life and speech are all compact.
All things that touch the simple, common heart,
These have you chosen, — these, the better part!
You are so human, — feeling, thought, and act.

And yet the other things you know as well,
And love almost as much: the wondrous spell
That nature weaves in grasses, trees, and flowers;
The doings of the busy, tireless hours;
What the birds know and what they sometimes tell.

Stay with us, Robert! Do not go away!
Stay with us yet for many a happy day!
Huge, joyful, tender, help our duller ways
To ring with music and to laugh with praise.
God bless you! and let all the people say,
Amen!

1893

"TEMPTED OF GOD"

And captive good attending captain ill. — SHAKESPEARE, Sonnet LXVI.

STRANGE paradox! Yet not more strange and sad
Than true to life. For often 't is the good
With strong temptation, not to be withstood,
That lures us surely downward to the bad.
Here with some beauteous moment sweet and glad,
There with some voice of pity we are woo'd
Which to resist were shameful, if we could;
And straightway, we are passion-drunk and mad.
O God! repent; nor give to Sin the power
To bait her trap with morsels such as these —
Things fair to see and kindliest sympathies —
Which turn our good to evil in an hour,
Or with the lapse of many treacherous days,
Fill the whole soul with terror and amaze.

A LIFE WELL LOST

'T was bitter cold, and on his narrow bed
Half-clad, half-warmed, the sculptor sleepless lay,
And shivered for the thing that he had wrought
To sweet perfection from the insensate clay.

How could she bear the winter's sudden shock?
Would she not crumble in the frosty air,
And all her beauty wane, and none believe
That he had ever fashioned her so fair?

It should not be! and from himself he drew
The covering poor, the garments thin and worn,
And wrapped them close about his goddess bright,
Then, naked, waited for the lagging morn.

It came to find his statue safe and whole,
And on his couch the sculptor lying — dead;
Dead, that his work might live when he was cold,
With his proud heart supremely comforted.

Brave heart! Who would not gladly freeze and die,
If something lovely from his moulding hand
Might him survive and be a thing of joy
Forever in a dull and weary land?

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

READ ON THE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH

Thou mighty God, who didst of old
The psalmist's wondrous song inspire,
Our hearts are glad that every age
Is touched by thy immortal fire.

We bless thee for that radiant band
Whose voices on our western shore
Have made a music clear and sweet
Which men shall love forevermore.

Still fresh the grief that fills our hearts
For him who lingered on awhile,
When all the rest had gone, to cheer
Our spirits with his happy smile.

Dear poet of the cheerful heart,
How can our voices choked with tears
Lift up aright a song to him
Whose cycle counts a hundred years?

He loved the vales, the woods, the streams,
The mountains cheered his loftier mind;
The winds their summits nurtured found
His soul as free and unconfined.

A deeper joy his song instilled
For every flower that gems the sod;
He looked through Nature's trembling veil,
And saw the face of Nature's God.

Yet more the press of busy men
Allured him than the forest's aisle,
And more the strife with public ill
Than ever the blue heaven's smile.

Wherever right her flag unfurled,
And justice showed a better way,
And truth and freedom spurned the night,
And hailed the burnished spears of day, —

There was his place, and there he made
His voice a clarion ringing clear
To rouse the sleepers, wake the dead,
And stay the faint with hope and cheer.

O thou who in the crowded streets
As in the leafy coverts dim
His song inspired, be thou with us
As ever in his day with him,

That nature's good our hearts may fill
With holy peace while still we move
With tireless feet on duty's quest,
And do the patient work of love.

1894

DEACON HUMPHREYS

94 YEARS OLD

The storm had kept young folks at home;
But he was in his place,
And bowed to words of prayer and praise
A grave and reverent face.

Not all the preacher's talk he heard,
Nor all the songs we sang;
But not in vain for him that day
The cheerful summons rang.

Full softly fell the snow without,
More softly on his mind
A blessing from the many years
Which he had left behind.

And whiter than the snow that lay
On turf and bush and tree,
The angel thoughts which in his heart
Were gathering silently.

The folk who made the company
  Were many more for him
Than those who entered at the door,
  But not more vague and dim.

They were his friends of long ago,
  The loved ones he had lost,
The boy who died for country's sake,
  And counted not the cost.

They were the men with whom he strove,
  The lads with whom he played;
They gathered round, they clasped his hands,
  But he was not afraid.

They turned no leaf, they made no noise,
  No other knew them there;
But who for him sang sweet as they,
  Or breathed so strong a prayer?

The benediction came at last;
  And homeward through the snow
The people went with happy talk
  And laughter sweet and low.

But little spoke the aged man;
And what he did let fall
Was even as one who dreams a dream,
And cannot tell it all.

MY FATHER'S QUADRANT

Poor homesick thing, I fear I do you wrong,
Far from the smiting of the eastern seas,
Here in my city house to hang you up,
My pride to flatter and mine eyes to please.

If you were conscious, you would ache and moan
Through every fibre of your mystic frame,
In this dull place to find yourself bestowed,
Nor hold me clear of treachery and blame.

How would you long to find yourself once more
Where the great waves go rolling up and down,
And the loud winds that spur their steaming flanks
The sailors buffet and their voices drown!

How would you wonder if the honest hand
That held you sunward on the heaving main
Had quite forgot the trick it knew of old,
And never so would manage you again!

Yea, verily, it *was* an honest hand,
Warm with the beating of an honest heart;
Never from stouter did good courage come,
Never from truer the good impulse start.

You were his guide on many a dangerous sea,
Through storm and darkness led him safely home:
As you to him, so he shall be to me,
Whatever seas I sail or lands I roam.

So onward sped, I cannot steer amiss,
Whatever darkness gathers round my way;
Let night come down, I set the faithful watch,
And wait it out until another day.

1895

"DEATH AND THE SCULPTOR"

Striving to shape the solemn Sphinx aright,
The sculptor works with high impassioned heart.
A little longer and his patient art
Shall triumph. Lo, across his waning light,
Chilling his fancy with a sudden blight,
A shadow, and an outstretched hand to part
The worker from his work forever! Start
Thou not, O man, with miserable fright.
How much more grand this Presence than thy dream!
What if her touch that seals thy pleading eyes
Shall them reopen under larger skies,
Where all thou here essay'dst in vain shall gleam
With rarer beauty, and the Sphinx, soothfast,
Shall her own riddle solve for thee at last.

1895

THE PRISM

"Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity."

SHELLEY, 't is greatly said, — and yet I would
That thou hadst been a century later born:
Then with far less of this majestic scorn
Hadst thou the mystery of Life withstood;
Some clearer vision of its steadfast good
Had come to thee in this our brighter morn
Of knowledge, and some voice profound to warn
Thy daring speech. For, lo, if but we could
Speak simple truth, the dome of Life would be
No glass discoloring God's eternal light;
Rather a glorious prism which, as the night
Makes heaven stars, his white infinity
Makes warm and tender, and we live impearled
With all the sweet perfection of the world.

1895

DEDICATION HYMN

O THOU who art the Builder strong
Of earth and seas and heavens high,
Thy presence fills the boundless world,
Thy power and grace are always nigh.

But still, in many a secret hour,
And many a calm and sheltered place,
We clearer seem to hear thy voice,
And nearer seems to shine thy face.

So may we often find it here:
No care, or pain, or grief forgot,
But all remembered as from thee,
Whose love were less if these were not.

No pomp of art, nor music's swell
Be here our best of prayer and praise,
But hearts that yearn to know thy will,
And love that hallows all our ways.

So shall it be, as forth we fare,
To ways unknown and tasks untried;
Thy perfect peace, surpassing thought,
Shall ever in our hearts abide.

In darkest hours we shall not fear;
In death, as life, shall all alarms
Grow faint and cease; for we shall lie
Safe in thine everlasting arms.

SUNT LACRIMAE RERUM

Yes, there are tears in things: the blind eyes
Of the most ancient hills weep their decay;
The trees their leaves which do not come to stay;
The clouds because their empire of the skies
Is for a little while, then lost; the dew that lies
All night expectant that it must away
'Fore the bright face of the long-wished-for day;
The lonely stars their banished mysteries.

But there is also laughter: after days
Of cheerless rain when the sun shines once more;
When Spring returns; to birds their mating time;
When roses lean together, and the sprays,
Of the tall meadow-rue; most when the shore
Hears with pure joy that immemorial chime.

1895

AN ODE

READ AT THE LAYING OF THE CORNER-STONE OF THE MUSEUM OF THE BROOKLYN INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, DECEMBER 14, 1895

Why break we here this precious mould that knew
Of old the farmer's honest toil and sweat, —
The sods that once, instead of glistening dew,
With ruddy drops from manly hearts were wet?

Here curled the smoke of pleasant household fires,
Here the full wains went home with harvest cheer,
And sturdy youth their genial, jovial sires
Helped heartily through all the changing year.

Here the hot share of war went rooting up
The summer grass, the flowers that did no wrong;
And History brimmed her immemorial cup
Once more with wine to quicken deathless song.

So peace and war their various memories blend
To doubly hallow this enchanted ground.
And, as we hither on our errand tend,
We hear their voices from the deep profound.

Is it for peace or war that we are here,
To lay this stone from which at length shall spring
A temple grand, which shall for many a year
Remain a beautiful and glorious thing?

For peace, indeed! for here shall breathe around
That quiet air, and still, which Milton's heart
Craved when he would truth's deep abysses sound
Or pleasure find in his immortal art.

Here from the market's fierce and deafening roar
And from the daily social noise and fret,
Beloved city of the island shore,
Thy sons and daughters, coming, shall forget

All foolish pleasures and corroding cares,
What time the priests of Science shall unroll
Her mystic page, while Art her splendor bares
To flood with rapture the attentive soul.

How the huge earth was fashioned they shall learn,
And hear the singing of the morning stars,
Through countless ages see man's promise burn,
Like the red sun through morning's dusky bars.

Here, like the kings the guilty monarch saw,
Coming and going, we shall see them, too;
And nations rising, falling, by that law
Which smites the evil, crowns the good and true.

Poets and painters here with rival powers
Shall speak, and bid the happy moment stay;
And the deft sculptor from the fleeting hours
A glory win that cannot pass away.

For peace or war? For peace, indeed, and yet
For war no less; so make the omen good
Of those who once their manly bosoms set,
Like mountain winds against the bristling wood, —

Nay, as the wood against the rushing storm
That trails its vernal beauty in the dust,
But leaves unspoiled the sinewy limbs, — the norm
Of freedom's hope and honor's glowing trust.

War let it be! The omen hailed with joy!
Our foreheads bared to take the mystic sign
Which seals us to the battles that destroy
All spirits dark, all influences malign,

That threaten life, that hinder and delay
Man's fatal hour, when he shall crouch no more,
But stand erect, and cloudless as the day
That floods a continent from shore to shore.

What do we build? Behold, an armory
Is here begun whose gleaming walls shall rise
Above our civic turmoil's whelming sea,
Seen from afar against the ambient skies,

Within whose spacious halls shall be bestowed
All instruments and weapons of that strife
Of truth with error that has onward flowed,
Like a great river through the dateless life

Of man on earth. These let us take, and smite
That hoary citadel wherein abide
The hosts of darkness, loving still the night,
When morning's happy gates are open wide.

We shall have great companions here, — the powers
Of man's unconquerable and deathless mind,
The stars that fight for him until the hours
Of fear and trembling all are left behind.

With such a battle joined, oh, who would stand
A useless idler in some safest place?
Behold, O God, we come at thy command,
And we shall see the glory of thy face!

THE TWOFOLD AWE

"Two things," said he of Königsberg,
Most gravely wise of modern men,
"With awe my spirit fill, whene'er
They break upon my ken:
The starry heavens, when they show
Their countless hosts in order bright;
The Law within, which teaches me
The way of Truth and Right."

How poor the man who cannot say
Amen to words so sweet and strong,
Whose heart has never known the beat
Of either mystic song!
Has never felt abashed and stilled
By starry splendors, cool and far;
Nor, when the inward silence thrilled,
How weak and strong we are!

But, oh, that each might win the grace
To hold the twofold awe as one;

To blend the inward voice with that
  Which speaks in star and sun;
From shining orbs that never swerve
  Upon their high and glorious way,
To seize the strength by which we might
  That law within obey!

Then would our lives as bravely shine
  As ever pomp of clearest night;
For suns and moons and stars are pale
  To Love and Truth and Right.
And then on whom in darkness sit
  Should gladsome light arise and shine;
And in our glory men should walk,
  And conquer by our sign.

1895

"LIKE A LAMB"

So March comes in! And the whole visible world
With his white fleeces is most wonderful.
And so the lovely image is made good
Of one who said, "He giveth snow like wool."

1896

THE WAY OF LIFE

Of all peculiarly beautiful things in Japan, the most beautiful are the approaches to high places of worship or of rest, — the Ways that go to Nowhere and the Steps that lead to Nothing. — LAFCADIO HEARN.

A THOUGHT is here, O spirits that deny,
To cheer us when your doleful prophecy
Of Nothingness and Nowhere breathes its sigh
Upon our hearts. For even if so it be,
And Death ends all, how beautiful the Way
That leads us thither, lit with suns and stars,
Bright with the seasons' magical array,
The morning's and the evening's cloudy bars,
The birds and poets singing as we go
From east to west across the pleasant land;
The clouds, majestic, moving to and fro,
And dear companions always close at hand
Heart-full of love! So rich, O God, the store
Of perfect things, how dare we ask for more?

1896

TOWARD THE UNKNOWN

All look gloomy when we are bearing south, or too much to the west, and all are beaming with joy when we are drifting to the northward, the farther the better. — NANSEN, *Farthest North*.

So it is written in brave Nansen's story
Of the good Fram, and all the fame and glory
Of those stout hearts who further northward bore
Than any ship had ever been before.

For them the vast unknown had naught of fear;
They yearned for it as for a mother dear
The homesick children absent from her side;
As yearns the bridegroom for the tarrying bride.

They knew how many hitherward had come,
Nor seen again the pleasant things of home;
Nor sent one word of aught that they had found
In any dim, enchanted sea or ground.

Yet still from out the unknown world there came
Voices that seemed to call them each by name;
Voices of bergs that grind and seas that roll,
Tempting and spurning man's imperial soul.

Would that it might be so with us who keep
Our fateful course o'er life's unmeasured deep;
That we, as cheerly, might that mystery hail,
Which is the port of every captain's sail.

What though no soul has ever yet returned
With news of those for whom our hearts have yearned
These many years! Who would not wish to go
Where they have gone, what they have learned to know?

No fear! That great unknown toward which we move
Is the wide sea of God's eternal love.
No ice-bound beauteous desolation there;
But life, more life — who would not onward fare?

1896

A PALINODE

GREAT Death, my thought has often done thee wrong,
Remembering with what stern and ruthless hand
Thou hast struck down some of that sacred band
Whom I had loved full tenderly and long, —
Some, too, whose lives were as a perfect song
Of peace and comfort on this strip of sand
'Twixt the two seas, — as if my heart to brand
With all thy terrors. But albeit strong
In agonies, yet thou canst be, I know,
As gentle in thy coming as the snow
Which falleth without wind; and thou wast so
With my lost saint; wherefore henceforth thy face
Shall wear for me a new and tender grace,
In grateful memory of that kind embrace.

1896

MEMORIAL VERSES

GEN. JOHN B. WOODWARD

Given under the auspices of the Brooklyn Institute

How short the time since winter's ice and snow
  Fettered the streams and made the pastures white!
But sudden all is changed, the spring, so slow
  To come, is here, a wonder and delight.

Naught can withstand her beauty, for her tide
  Swells like a sea, until it takes in fee
Our city streets, and their poor sods abide
  Content that she has touched them graciously.

And yet, somehow, it does not seem the same
  As other springtimes we have known ere this;
Duller the light of its ethereal flame,
  Less warm its smile, less rapturous its kiss.

Something is missing from the joyful scene,
  And the soft air for something seems to grieve;
Some blessed thing is not as it has been
  Nor any skill have we that can retrieve

Our bitter loss; for one has gone away
Not to return, who was the light and joy
Of many hearts, their comfort and their stay.
Safe from all earthly trouble and annoy

Is he, henceforth, and it is well with him.
We may not doubt the goodness infinite
Which so decrees, yet must our hearts o'erbrim
With some fond tears, not idle nor unfit.

For he was made in such an ample mould,
On such a full and large and liberal plan,
That Shakespeare's self, rejoicing to behold
His goodly frame, had said, This is a man!

And all men loved his sturdy soldier strength,
His honest, bluff, and hearty soldier ways,
His Saxon* speech, which was not prone to length,
As if on earth we had a million days.

Simple and plain he was in everything,
As though, a stranger to our languid race,
He came to make our ways with laughter ring
And cheer us with the sunlight in his face.

And yet, though strong, he was most gentle, too;
His was the kindly heart, the liberal hand;
Let there be need of service, tender, true,
None readier than he in all the land.

Had duty called, he would have gone with joy
To meet his death where battle was aligned,
And yet the things that make for peace employ
More welcome gave his quiet, steadfast mind.

He loved the painter's art, the statue's grace,
All lovely things that make our mortal life
More worthy of the genial hopes we trace
In hearts that weary of its endless strife.

He loved our civic honor as his own;
He would have had it like a beacon flare
On some great headland, and its splendor thrown
Wide o'er that sea where honest men despair,

And cry, How ever bring the Ship of State,
Beset by pirates, with a pirate crew,
Safe into port? And some unto her fate
Would leave her, mourning, Nothing can we do.

But our good John, so stout and big of heart,
Let who would doubt the end, so would not he;
And something of his courage could impart
To those whose hearts were failing utterly.

Thank God that we have known this manly man;
That we could call him ours; that he has stood
High-towering, firm among us as the oak
That overtops his brothers of the wood!

In bronze or marble shape him as we may,
That men unborn may on his visage gaze,
He will not chide the wreath we bring to-day,
For love is better than immortal bays.

1896

THE MAKING OF MEN

As the insect from the rock
  Takes the color of its wing;
As the boulder from the shock
  Of the ocean's rhythmic swing
Makes itself a perfect form,
  Learns a calmer front to raise;
As the shell, enameled warm
  With the prism's mystic rays,
Praises wind and wave that make
  All its chambers fair and strong;
As the mighty poets take
  Grief and pain to build their song;
Even so for every soul,
  Whatsoe'er its lot may be —
Building, as the heavens roll,
  Something large and strong and free —
Things that hurt and things that mar
  Shape the man for perfect praise;
Shock and strain and ruin are
  Friendlier than the smiling days.

1896

IN EXTREMITY

Come, science, do thy worst or even best;
Come, patient critic, with thy searching doubt
From scripture wonder pluck the warrant out;
And every hope that harbors in the breast
Be of all right and title dispossessed,
Till, where heaven was, the dark shall rim about
A greater darkness, and the fool shall flout
All thought or dream of the immortal rest.

But thou, my Shakespeare, hast not tasted death:
God were not good if thou hadst failed to know
What joy and blessing from thy spirit flow
For all men drawing glad or painful breath.
And where thou art all human life must be,
Heart of thy heart, through all eternity.

1896

CONCIO AD CLERUM

READ AT THE MINISTERS' LUNCH IN NEW YORK CITY

Many a poet has sung ere now
Of the song he hoped to sing,
But never had quite found the music right
That was there in the quivering string.
Forever lovely and strong and sweet,
It was there just back of his tongue;
But never the word, like a joyous bird,
Its heart on the breeze had flung.

Now we that preach as the others sing,
We know how it is ourselves:
We have sermons galore, a fearful store,
Packed up on the handy shelves;
But where is the sermon we fain would preach,
Have followed for many a year,
And yet, somehow, to our cleaving prow
It is never a whit more near?

There are days when we think it will surely come,
  There are nights when the dark is bright
With the trail of its hem, like a priceless gem,
  And we wake with a happy fright —
To find it has vanished, already far
  On the track it has held so long,
Away and away where it will not stay
  Any more than the flying song.

Now you that love the preacher's work
  As much as the poet his,
Come, tell me true what you would do
  For to touch this height of bliss?
I know: you would wrestle and sweat and pray,
  Like Jacob, the livelong night,
If at break of day it would come to stay, —
  The sermon you fain would write.

And when it came, O God, to think
  What a sermon it would be!
It would be as high as the starry sky
  And as deep as the deep, deep sea;
It would stir the heart of the youth and maid
  With a strange and a sweet unrest,

And their souls would yearn for a glad return
To the things they know are best.

And the sinner there in his cosy pew,
As snug as a man could be,
Should sudden feel, like a stroke of steel,
The truth that would make him free, —
If he would but heed; and the aching heart,
So weary under its load,
Would laugh and sing like a crazy thing,
For joy of the painful road.

And the Sunday paper should be accurst,
And the women forget their whist,
And the children's play for that one day
Be never a moment missed.
It would be for all such a goodly time
As the stars in their courses know
When they all are out with a joyous shout,
And the earth lies still below.

But it will not come, it will not come,
The sermon we fain would write.
It is evermore just on before,

If it is n't way out of sight;
But better so than to smiling go
In the way by the foolish trod;
Let us do our best with a manly zest,
And leave the rest to God.

1896

THE NEW SCIENCE

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? — JOB xxxviii, 4.

THAT was in the later dawn:
  Then I was where now I am, —
In thy bosom; there before
  Time's first planet proudly swam
Into space, and back of then,
  In the darkness thick and long,
Closer was I knit with thee
  Than the music with the song.

Strange my fortunes since have been, —
  Bathed in fire, in floods congealed,
In the nebulous mass aglow,
  In the ardent planet wheeled;
From the shapeless, slow but sure,
  Taking shapes with beauty rife;
From the senseless clod at length
  Plucking out the heart of life.

Upward, onward, striving still
  Through the elemental forms;

Cradled in the monster trees,
Rocked by earthquakes, nursed by storms;
Out of weakness growing strong,
Working still the heavenly plan,
Learning what the beast must do,
Ere he find himself a man.

From the plant that useless grows,
Making corn for daily bread;
From the fear of stock and stone,
Homeward to the Father led;
Those with whom in ages gone
Red of hand I hotly strove,
Taking to a brother's arms
With the awful might of love.

Never severed from thy heart,
Never parted from thy side,
Still as in the later dawn
In thy bosom I abide;
Still as in the early dark,
Ere the worlds began to be,
Thou, my God, and I are one, —
Thou in me and I in thee.

1897

TO E. E. HALE

ON HIS 75TH BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY

Labor and sorrow, — such the Psalmist found
Is theirs who pass beyond the allotted bound.
And thou, in truth, hast made the promise good,
Encountering sorrow in a mighty flood,
But working on, so getting heart to bear
The sorrow bravely, and right onward fare.
Since sorrow must be, God be thanked, old friend,
For work, hard work, until the happy end!

1897

"THE DEEP THAT LIETH UNDER"

Oft have we heard that in those regions where
The coast-wise mountains plunge so far below
The sea as, from its level, up they go
Towards heaven's height, the placid waters there
Are so translucent that, for those who fare
Across them, all the things that strow
The deep sea's floor, appalling, gloom and glow,
Frighting the eyes that on that vision stare.

Alas, we need not go abroad to see
Such awful things! Each heart its soundless deep
Knoweth full well, and moments when are shown
In startling light its utmost mystery;
Yea, all the secrets which its caverns keep,
And wrecks which Love moans with perpetual moan.

1898

GIVEN IN MARRIAGE

M. H. C.

YES, she is gone! The blessed words are said
That make her of another's life a part,
And the deep vows are spoken, heart to heart
Responding, and my little girl is wed
To her true mate, and, homeward, music-led,
Her feet have come; and we have seen her start
Forth and away, so glad, while we the smart
Of tears have known in lonely silence shed.
The frolic laughter ceases and the fun
Of the bright company of happy friends.
Thinking kind thoughts of her, each homeward wends
His way, and all the pretty pageantry is done.
God has her in his keeping: Yes, but I
Can only think of her first infant cry.

October 26, 1898

FULL CYCLE

Spain drew us proudly from the womb of night,
A lusty man-child of the Western wave, —
Who now, full-grown, smites the old mid-wife down,
And thrusts her deep in a dishonored grave.

1898

PREPARED

Oft have I wondered at the fearless heart
With which strong men and tender women go
To meet great Death ; but now I seem to know
The secret of their courage. 'T is a part
Of their whole life, the end of all thou art,
O Nature, to their souls. The steady flow
Of time is ceaseless ; thick thy hand doth sow
The void with stars, while from earth's bosom start
The lovely flowers, and there are trees and streams
And women's faces and love's mystery.
And all these things are influences that give
The needed lesson. They are all foregleams
Of the one strangeness and the last. How be
Of Death afraid when we have dared to live ?

1898

ANTI-CLIMAX

It is magnificent, a city's pride,
This giant stairway built with lavish art
Of gleaming marble quarried from the heart
Of earth's best store ; and upon either side
Are lions couchant, — glorious beasts that bide,
Or seem to bide, their time. Stand here apart,
And question reverently if there could start
From earth to heaven a way more beautiful.

Leading to what ? Behold the builder's sin !
A painted wall with little holes therein
A new grave's width and length ; and this the end
To which the beauty and the splendor tend !
And if the stairway we call life were such
Nor man nor God could ever deem it much.

1898

SURSUM CORDA!

Lift up your hearts, young men and maidens sweet!
Your hearts lift up, you in your perfect prime,
And you whose eyes with gathering dimness greet
Dear, faithful comrades of the elder time!
Lift up your hearts in hope and happy cheer
For that great future which is drawing near!

It cannot be, it must not, shall not be
That this dear land, won at such awful cost
For Freedom's seat, men yet unborn shall see
To all great things ingloriously lost.
Our God shall keep the promise he has made
To those great hearts which on his law were stayed.

Not without us, O God, that promise be
Kept for our children, and their children's peace!
Take us, and mould us to thy high decree!
Through us thine honor and thy love increase!
Not without us thy triumph shall be won:
Thy will, O God, thy will and ours, be done!

1898

THE DANCING LIGHTS

From out the country spaces cool and clear
We flash into the maze of city streets.
What pageant this that straightway doth appear?
What land of faery that our vision greets?

A feast of lights! And as we roll along,
As if each one some lovely dancer held,
They interweave as to some choric song
Which from the dark mysteriously welled;

To whose soft tune the dancers round and round
Move in a rapture tremulous and intense,
With languorous paces that make faintest sound
And ever duller and more drowsy sense.

The dancing lights! Too lingeringly I gazed
On their warm motions, till — as one who reels
When by some beauteous, blinding vision dazed,
And then, back to himself returning, feels

THE DANCING LIGHTS

Right glad of heart — so, then, it was with me
As, looking up, I saw the heaven's calm
Shedding the light of stars so silently
That on my heart that stillness fell like balm.

Far off and cool, each in his perfect sphere
Held, as if motionless, his awful way ;
Star unto star discoursing crystal clear,
As when they sang creation's primal lay.

Ah me ! I would that when the dancing lights
Of wayward passion seek my soul to sway
With their wild motion, from those meaner sights
I might be strong to turn my eyes away

To where th' eternal stars so purely shine —
Truth, Beauty, Good — and by that vision blest,
Lifting my heart to make its clearness mine,
Taste then, earth-bound, the everlasting rest.

1899

A GOOD PHYSICIAN

Calvin Briggs, who practiced medicine in Marblehead, Mass., for many years; during, I think, his whole professional life. He was the son of Rev. James Briggs, of Cummington, Mass., who was next neighbor to the poet Bryant's father, and who was the "aged man upon his bier" of Bryant's beautiful poem, "The Old Man's Funeral." His severe and yet effective skill cured me of a congenital blindness of such a nature that I am assured by a distinguished ophthalmologist of having had a very narrow escape.

His name was Calvin, and like his namesake,
The famous John, who in Geneva taught,
He dealt in brimstone freely, and he wrought
With many drugs that were not nice to take.
A stern old man, yet doth his name awake
Thoughts in my breast that are forever fraught
With gratefulness. He such a blessing brought
Upon my life that simply for his sake
All good physicians are more dear to me:
He gave me eyes when but for him I might
Have lived half dead in a perpetual night;
Have read no book, have seen no flower or tree,
And missed, O God! forever that one face
Which is my best assurance of thy grace.

1899

THE BLACK MAN'S BURDEN

Take up the black man's burden!
Not his across the seas,
But his who grows your cotton,
And sets your heart at ease,
When to the sodden rice fields
Your children dare not go,
Nor brave the heat that singes like
The foundry's fiery glow.

Take up the black man's burden!
He helped to share your own
On many a scene by battle-clouds
Portentously o'erblown;
On Wagner's awful parapet,
As late where Shafter's plan
Was for the boys to take the lead,
He showed himself a man.

Take up the black man's burden!
'T is heavy with the weight
Of old ancestral taint, the curse
Of new-engendered hate;

The scorn of those who throw to him
  Their table's meanest crust —
Children of those who made him serve
  Their idleness and lust.

Take up the black man's burden!
  When you were out for votes,
His geese — they all were swans to you,
  And sheep were all his goats.
'T was "Pompey this" and "Pompey that,"
  And "Pompey, bless your heart!"
But it 's "Devil take you, Pompey!" now
  You play the lion's part.

Take up the black man's burden!
  If you have got a brief
For all the suffering of the earth,
  To give them swift relief;
Don't let the millions here at home,
  Whose bonds you struck away,
Learn from your heedlessness to cry,
  "Give back the evil day!"

Take up the black man's burden!
  O black men, unto you

THE BLACK MAN'S BURDEN

The summons is, when those forget
  Who should be kind and true!
Put not your trust in such as boast
  Straight hair and paler skin;
Their duty calls them otherwhere.
  Fight your own fight and — win.

Take up the black man's burden!
  Poor patient folk and tame —
The heritage of cursing,
  Of foolishness and blame.
Your task the task of earning,
  By many an evil pressed,
Warm, touched with human pity,
  The friendship of the best.

February 21, 1899

THE NEW HUMANITY

(Suggested by the Congressional proposal to deport the Chinese from Hawaii as "unlawfully in the United States.")

> "An' whose free latch-string never was drawed in
> Against the poorest child of Adam's kin."

So Lowell sang, — but now it is not true:
Long since we drew the shortened latch-string in
From men of Asia guilty of no sin
But willingness for little much to do.
Yet many found asylum 'mid the blue
Of Western seas till we, with hellish din,
Making for Asia, their last refuge win
For our dear country. Now, alas! they rue
The stars and stripes above it. Stripes alone,
Poor yellow-skins, for you, who, being annexed
To Freedom's heritage, are sore perplexed
To find you must get out again — move on.
"But your free latch-string!" — Never name it more;
Stolen your hut, we kick you from the door.

1899

THE KISS OF GOD

When the great leader's task was done,
He stood on Pisgah's height,
And saw, far off, the westering sun
Drop down into the night;

Saw, too, the land in which, alas!
He might not hope to dwell
Spread fairly out; and then — for so
Talmudic legends tell —

Jehovah touched him, and he slept;
And smooth the mountain sod
Was leveled o'er him, and 't was writ,
"Died by the kiss of God."

The kiss of God! We talk of death
In many learned ways, —
We know so much; which of them all
So simple in its praise

THE KISS OF GOD

As this which from the oldest days
  Has treasured been apart,
To comfort in this heel of time
  The mourner's aching heart?

We walk our bright or desert road,
  And, when we reach the end,
Bends over us with gentle face
  The Universal Friend.

Upon our lips his own are laid;
  We do not strive nor cry.
The kiss of God! Upon that kiss
  It is not hard to die.

1899

THE JOLLY CARPENTERS

My Uncle Tom and Uncle Joe
Were carpenters, and I
Was always happy in their shop,
A-seein' of 'em ply

Their honest craft; and then I liked
The very smell of wood,
When it was bein' saw'd and plan'd,
And still it does me good.

And, as they work'd and work'd, there used
From either's bench to fall
Shavings so pretty that I thought
They 'd want to keep them all.

But no! They did n't care for them;
And, when I stammered, "Can't
I have just two or three of them?"
They said, "Take all you want."

THE JOLLY CARPENTERS

My Uncle Tom and Uncle Joe
  Made various kinds of things,
Houses and cradles; but the best
  Were just these lovely rings

Of spruce and hemlock, oft'ner pine,
  Which now and then the girls
Would twist into their golden hair
  And play that they were curls.

It seems to me that somehow so
  It is with all of us:
We work and work, and there are things,
  'Bout which we make no fuss,

Which, like the shavings crisp and clean,
  That so unheeded fall,
Are quite the nicest and the best
  And sweetest things of all.

But if we did n't do our work
  In some right manful way,
Where 'd be the accidental stuff
  For other people's play?

1899

AN AUTUMN SONG

Comes the pleasant autumn time,
And the leaves are getting brown;
Loosened from their summer hold,
They are softly wavering down.

What a carpet warm and bright
Make they in the sheltered ways!
What a splendor on the hills,
Filling many hearts with praise!

Countless as the upper stars,
Asters glorify the sod,
And the gentian, crisp and cool,
Lifts its slender cup to God.

Homeward from his ripened field
Goes the farmer's loaded wain,
Ruddy with the orchard's yield,
Yellow with the golden grain.

AN AUTUMN SONG

Oh, the bounty flowing free!
  Oh, the beauty sweet and rare!
Let the nations curse and kill:
  Nature, thou art good and fair.

1899

TO MRS. JULIA WARD HOWE

AT THE DINNER OF THE UNITARIAN CLUB, NEW YORK, APRIL 18, 1900

You sang for us a glorious marching song
When the great Union tottered and it seemed
That all we best had loved or hoped or dreamed
Was fatal loss. And, lo, how swift along
The serried ranks grew manifold and strong
The echoes till, at last, there faintly gleamed
A ray of hope, and ever higher streamed
The starry flag, while paled the ancient wrong!

Much have you done since then to win our love,
Pleading the cause of full-orbed womanhood,
Servant of all things fair and kind and good.
Now ere you leave us, may that sacred dove,
Whose name is peace, come back to cheer your heart,
And nevermore from you, or us, depart.

HYMN

WRITTEN FOR THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

A GOODLY tree our fathers planted here,
Their faithful hearts commingling hopes and fears.
How brave to us doth now its strength appear,
Ringed with the growth of five-and-seventy years!

Its tonic leaves have for our healing been,
We have been grateful for its pleasant shade;
And cheerful songs from out its glimmering sheen
Have for our hearts a pleasant music made.

Many the days of sunshine it has known,
Many the storms which have its vigor tried.
Through storm and sunshine it has sturdier grown,
And flung its branches wider and more wide.

Sweet has its fruitage been for fainting men
Whose souls were hungry for the living bread,
Eating whereof and taking heart again,
Upon God's errands swift their feet have sped.

Long may its strength endure, its span increase,
Its blossom laugh, its fruit be large and fair;
Deep in its heart be heard the song of peace,
And heaven bathe it with its purest air!

May 25, 1900.

PHILLIPS BROOKS

AFTER READING HIS LIFE BY A. V. G. ALLEN

Here was a man cast in such generous mould
Of body, brain, and conscience, heart and soul,
That if till now we never had been told
Of an eternal life and perfect goal
Beyond the verge of this our mortal space,
Straightway of such we should conceive, and dare
Believe it builded in God's boundless grace
After this man's great fashion, high and fair.

We could not make him dead; and if for him
That fuller life were stablished and secure,
Then for all souls, however fallen, and dim
With soil and stain, it could not be less sure;
For he no joy in heaven's height could find
Save as he shared it with all humankind.

1901.

DIVINE SERVICE

"I was in the Spryte on a Sondaye."
Old Translation: Rev. i, 10.

SERVICE divine! Such didst thou render me,
Thou blessed God, so bountiful and free,
That of my hap I in good sooth could say,
"I was in the Spryte on a Sondaye."

Gently the church-bell smote the morning air,
Sweetly inviting me to praise and prayer.
I heeded not; in quite another way
I was in the Spryte on a Sondaye.

Quiet, demure, my neighbors went along.
"Too few," I mourned, "the heavenly-minded throng!"
Yet, loving theirs, I went another way,
To be in the Spryte on a Sondaye.

Blue, deepest blue, the sky's immensity,
Where white cloud-galleons floated proud and free.
Great wealth, I trow, in their deep bosoms lay
For me in the Spryte on a Sondaye.

Sometimes there came a happy bird, whose note
Tasked the full measure of his tiny throat,
As if he did his very best to say,
"We 're both in the Spryte on a Sondaye."

The grass-heads nodded gently to and fro
In the soft wind that did a-wooing go
With the tall trees; I smelt the new-mown hay;
I was in the Spryte on a Sondaye.

God served me, too, with many lovely flowers,
All fresher from the early morning showers;
So pure, so sweet, so bright and fine and gay,
As if all in the Spryte on a Sondaye.

Queer little noises stiller made the air;
Small-creature life seemed stirring everywhere;
And every speck seemed to have its own way
To be in the Spryte on a Sondaye.

Sweetest of all, my daughter's little child,
New-born each day from heavens undefiled,
Played round about. What could I do but pray
For a Spryte like hers on a Sondaye?

Homeward the church-folk came, subdued and slow,
And seemed to chide me. But they did not know
What service mine; how truly I could say,
"I was in the Spryte on a Sondaye."

CHESTERFIELD, MASS., 1901

THE CHILDREN'S MISSION

Why are the little children sent?
Who better answer can impart
Than his who took them in his arms,
And held them to his heart?

He said it was that we might see
God's kingdom in their faces shine,
And in their humbleness discern
How men may be divine.

Help us, O God, our Father kind,
To heed the lesson sweet and mild:
The image of thy heaven to see
In every little child.

And where that heaven is dimmed with tears,
Or soiled with earthly dust and stain,
Help us to dry the tears and make
All pure and bright again.

1901

A DRIFT-WOOD PAPER-CUTTER

N. W. H.

How strange that that which clove the sea
  And with its vast concussion shook,
Should fare this Christmas time to me,
  To cut the pages of a book.

Part of some good ship's stern or keel
  Or deck, or knees, or sheathing strong,
It felt the wild waves monstrous leap,
  It heard the thunder of their song.

How dull and tame henceforth its fate!
  Upon a student's desk to lie,
Where, for the ships of old, sedate
  And laboring thoughts go by.

But hold! a wiser whim occurs:
  My books are deeper than the sea;
In them a wilder motion stirs
  Than in that blue immensity.

Then why should this your gift deplore
The lot your love to it assigns;
As if its ventures all were o'er,
In stagnant waters cast its lines?

Ventures more bold than e'er till now
Have made its inmost fibre thrill,
Await the cleaving of its prow,
As it shall go where'er I will.

A vaster sea it shall career
Than Colon's dauntless spirit trod,
And haply it may bring me cheer
From strange new continents of God.

1901

AN AUTUMN FIELD

How rich and full in June's all-perfectness
  Was the lush grass which in this ample field
  Grew riotously glad! How prodigal the yield
Of every flower whose absence had made less
The bounteous whole! Now, where that sweet excess
  Abounded, to itself has bareness sealed
  The thriftless sods: reft, as a glorious shield
Of all its wrought and painted loveliness.

Yet not quite all, for here and there, behold,
  A flower, like those which made the summer sweet,
Puts forth some meagre tint of red or gold,
  To make the barrenness seem more complete! —
Such overflow of life, such wealth of bliss;
Now, for remembrance and endurance — this!

1902

HORATIO STEBBINS

On the same day, thine by the Western sea,
Mine where the Eastern rolls its music in,
Our work began, the continent between
Our sundered ways. Thwart that immensity,
When doubt and fear had well-nigh mastered me,
How often has thy cheery message been
A trumpet calling me to rise and win
O'er foes abject triumphant victory!

The Eastern and the Western ocean make
One music. Even so thy heart and mine
Have beat accordant. Silent now is thine;
Yet still from thy great spirit I will take
Fresh courage daily, conquer by thy sign,
Be something braver, better, for thy sake.

April, 1902

EDWARD EVERETT HALE

A MAN without a country! Why, indeed,
But that all countries underneath the sun
Call him their own? Yet, loved so much by all,
Best is he loved by that most happy one
Which, while rejoicing that it gave him birth,
Hears the "All Hail!" which circles round the earth,
With grateful heart, — to every sister land,
"In His Name," offering a "Helping Hand."

April 3, 1902

LULLABY

Day is ending; night is falling;
From the Land of Drowsihead,
Don't you hear the Sand-Man calling,
"Children all should be abed"?
Go to sleep! Go to sleep!

Not for all his golden treasure
Will he sell the wicked King
Sleepy-sand the smallest measure,
Nor for any precious thing.
Go to sleep! Go to sleep!

Best he loves the poor man's dwelling,
Tire and ache the surest plea
For the gift beyond all telling
Sweet to men on land and sea.
Go to sleep! Go to sleep!

Bless him for his magic fetter!
Now, my sweet, he comes to you.
Eyes wide open? All the better!
He will know just what to do.
Go to sleep! Go to sleep!

1902

THE BLACK SNOW-CLOUD

Who would have thought such whiteness lay concealed
Within the bosom of so black a pall?
Who, that such strange white peace the cloud could yield
When death's black moment overshadows all?

January 6, 1903

JEWEL-WEED

Dainty enough to grace a lady's ear,
Thousands of blossoms swaying to and fro
In the light wind, and countless butterflies
In the bright sunshine softly come and go
On honey bent. The flowers are orange-hued,
And orange-hued the feasters on their sweets.
So like the two that pretty doubts intrude
Anent this wonder that my vision greets.
For half I deem the flowers are butterflies
That on the flowerless stalks have come to stay,
And half, or more, that the bright butterflies
Are blossoms that the wind has blown away.

1903

SHERMAN HOAR

Others he saved; himself he could not save:
So ran of old the taunt of those who saw
The Son of Mary perish by their law.
Here was a man who, like that great one, gave
His life for others: let the foolish rave,
And cowards shirk; he from Oblivion's maw
Would pluck a life exempt from stain or flaw:
Then sudden, for his guerdon, found a grave.
But, no! Death cannot quench the flaming soul.
It saves itself by giving; by its zeal
Of honest service to the public weal;
By loss of ease and gain, which to the roll
Of God's co-workers of enduring fame
Adds one more spotless and inspiring name.

1903

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING

A HYMN SUNG AT THE ARLINGTON STREET CHURCH, CELEBRATING THE UNVEILING OF MR. HERBERT ADAMS'S STATUE OF CHANNING, BOSTON, JUNE 1, 1903

SPIRIT Divine, who, in all lands and ages,
In holy souls thy dwelling-place hast made,
We bless thee for thy heroes, saints, and sages,
In whom thou hast thy love and truth displayed.

Yea, and not only thanks for those who sought thee
Long since, and found thee with a glad surprise, —
Our grateful hearts their offerings have brought thee
For, close at home, a faithful one and wise.

Simply and purely of thy love he told us,
Showed us the Father, merciful and kind,
Yearning with strong compassion to enfold us,
In error wandering and with passion blind.

He of our nature's solemn height assured us,
Welcomed thy likeness in each human soul,
Ever to things more excellent allured us,
Speeding us onward to the flying goal.

Loved he thy truth with pure and perfect passion,
Its coming hailed as by no limit bound:
Where thou hadst work for him in any fashion,
There tireless, fearless, was thy prophet found.

Dead, he yet speaketh, and his voice is sounding
Now in our ears as when our fathers heard:
To us he publishes thy grace abounding,
To us he brings thy everlasting word.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

A POEM READ IN THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC, BROOKLYN, N. Y., AT A CELEBRATION OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF EMERSON'S BIRTH

How make my verse so simple and sincere
That it shall merit nothing now and here
Of accusation? Who may sing of one
So simple and sincere as Emerson,
Without reproach or fear?

We who New England love because we drew
From her our life, from her the blood and thew
Whereby we seek and yearn and strive and dare, —
Grave, noble mother, dear beyond compare,
We bring thee offerings due.

For he of thy pure elements was made,
Thy winds and waters in his pulses played,
Thy rocks and hills to him their vigor gave,
Its briny tang thy shore-consuming wave,
Its calm when winds are laid.

As in his blood thy genius worked amain,
So in his spirit, for more precious gain,
New England souls, great mothers and good sires,
Guarding Religion's deathless altar-fires
With holy fear and pain.

Nor these alone, but all the centuries down
Aiders and friends of high fulfilled renown, —
Shakespeare, revolving his majestic sphere;
Heroic Plutarch, sounding lofty cheer;
Plato, of all most dear.

Nor less to him than voices of the sages,
From the deep bosom of the solemn ages,
Were things that with their penetrating ray
In the strait confines of the common day
The quiet heart engages.

Nothing to him was common or unclean,
Nothing, so God had made it, poor or mean;
The sheet let down from heaven held for him
No stock or stone without some presence dim
Of the one God, unseen.

With smiling eyes he looked, and saw unrolled
(As 't were an endless scroll) the manifold
Of space and time ; and what he saw and heard
He sang like some full-throated, joyous bird,
And all the wonder told.

He saw the manifold, but through it all
He felt the mighty everlasting thrall
Of the one Power and Love which shapes and warms
The many-millioned world of beauteous forms
By Igdrasil let fall.

God is, not was! Thus, in a faithless time,
Clearly he uttered his own faith sublime,
Each sending back to that eternal fount
Which in each private heart doth ever mount
As in th' Judean prime.

And still o'er all, alike for God and man,
And wide as Nature's sempiternal plan,
For him the Ought its awful mandate sped,
Made thrill with life the kingdoms of the dead,
One Law since worlds began.

That to obey, he taught, is life indeed,
And whoso gives to that his utmost heed,
Him naught above nor from beneath can harm :
No heaven can bribe him, and no hell alarm
This man, this thinking reed.

Great spirit, purge our eyes that we may see
How in these times we best may honor thee,
Lest with our lips we idly praise thy name,
While still our lives are full of blame and shame,
Our hearts still far from thee.

Help hate whate'er by thee was hated most,
The lust of things, the rich man's sensual boast,
The search 'mid signs and wonders for the God
Whose splendor shineth everywhere abroad,
And beacons every coast.

Help us to love what to thy heart was dear, —
Each season's part in the whole bounteous year,
The simple life, the spirit, first and last,
To its own native centre holding fast
With heart of dauntless cheer.

If to such things we can, O friend, attain,
If so each one with his own sceptre reign
O'er his own life, not thankless shall we prove
For thy great ministry of thought and love,
Nor live, nor die, in vain.

May 25, 1903

THE SCANT SUPPLY

There was not enough of the last war to go round. — THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

Lo, what a strange lament bursts from the lips
Of our bold captain whom these piping times
Of peace oppress with their monotonous rhymes
Of wealth and ease! No more the embattled ships
Hurling forth death; the foliage rank that drips
With the hot blood of men; the hideous crimes
Whereby to honor sneaking treachery climbs;
No more the great hopes suffering vast eclipse!

Mourn for the scant supply of foul disease,
Of loathsome wounds that drain young life away,
Of limbless bodies and perduring pain;
Of anguished mothers and of wives whose knees
Bend vainly unto God for those who stay
So long and send no word and come no more again.

1904

TIMEO DANAOS

Art proud, my country, that these mighty ones,
  Wearing the jeweled splendor of old days,
  Come bringing prodigality of praise
To thee amid thy light of westering suns;
Bidding their blaring trumpets and their guns
  Salute thee, late into their crooked ways
  Now fallen; to their sorrow and amaze,
Blood of whose hearts the ancient honor runs?

Nay, fear them rather, for they cry with glee,
"She has become as one of us, who gave
All that she had to set a people free:
  She wears our image — she that loved the slave!"
Fear them, for there is blood upon their hands,
And on their heads the curse of ruined lands.

1904

"SHORE ACRES"

How sweetly it comes back, how tenderly,
That evening's end; no little thing forgot;
The fire made safe; set back the steaming pot;
Windows and door shut tightly as could be;
The tall clock wound; the house all still; and then —
The dear old man his candle takes and goes
To seek his own well-earned, prayer-blest repose,
His heart at peace with all the sons of men.

And, when we to the end of toil have won,
And it is time for us to go to bed,
May we as gently move unto our rest,
Leaving no simplest needful thing undone,
No word of healing gentleness unsaid,
Some lamp of God close to our bosoms prest.

1904

"O THAT LAND! THAT LAND!"

MAY 23, 1846

In my dear mother's Bible, by the hand
Of my dear father written large and clear,
With the day stated, and the month and year
And place, — the lonely Banks of Newfoundland, —
These simple words of doubtful meaning stand;
And much I wonder what of hope or fear,
Or homesick longing, or half-hearted cheer,
Thrilled in that outcry toward some distant strand.

That land! What land? Yearned his fond heart that day
For heaven's height or for that humbler place
Where he had left his wife and children three?
Divine who can. Enough for me to say,
It is all one. His best of God's pure grace
Was, here or there, with his best loved to be.

1904

LATE KNOWLEDGE

Lifting mine eyes unto the hills from whence
My help hath come through the long summer days,
They throng enfolded with the silvery haze
Which seems more spirit than a thing of sense;
And lo, a wonder! — that they borrow thence
Clearness of outline: not the day-star's rays,
Spoiling illusion with their ruthless blaze,
So fix each hill, sharp, separate, immense.

And when to my death-hallowed friends there clings
A tender mist of unavailing tears,
That trembling veil such revelation brings
As never life's full glare: straightway appears
Divinely clear, seen in that softened light,
What life's hard blaze had hidden from my sight.

1904

DEFIANCE

"Take what you can, sirs" (thus the story runs),
Said a poor scholar, who for dearest book
Had loved his Virgil; and the wretches took
The book away from him, and thought his sun's
Light was put out. But he had balked their rage,
Learning by heart the Mantuan's lofty rhyme,
So, 'gainst all spite of theirs or envious time,
Holding it safe — a flawless heritage.

So, dearest, since I have you in my heart,
Like that poor scholar I those powers defy
Which threat to rob me: You may live or die,
But nevermore from me shall you depart.
I have you safe; "Take what you can," I say;
"Here she abides, and will abide alway."

1904

THE BROKEN GLASS

When it was whole, across the mirror fine
What images of strength and beauty passed!
Here was the loveliness of woman glassed,
Of children too, and only less divine,
The forms of rocks and trees, the glorious shine
Of suns and stars and splendidly amassed
The journeying clouds; beneath them ocean's vast
Illimitable surge of restless brine.

'T is shattered now, and all these things and more —
Great thoughts, imaginations strong and free —
Are in this glass reflected brokenly;
Crazed is the dance upon this polished floor.
Poor useless frame that held this sacred trust,
Too soon thou canst not crumble into dust.

1904

FAINT, YET PURSUING

THE LAST JOURNEY, FROM CHESTERFIELD TO NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 25, 1904

Splitting the evening silence like a wedge,
Our flying train sped its appointed way,
And high above the black horizon's edge
The full-orbed moon made night a softer day.
And ever as she sailed through cloud and clear,
One faithful star toiled onward in her wake,
Seeming as if, with heart of dauntless cheer,
Night's argent queen it hoped to overtake.

In vain the toil, and to my inward eye
I was that star, the moon my flying goal,
Which through the spaces of an ampler sky
Still lured and baffled my adventurous soul,
Defeated ever, yet divinely blest:
One more insatiate striver for the best.

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